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207 Exposure to the media of mass communication seems to act, in
212 a sense, as a substitute for literacy. It may be that through
these means either an illiterate farmer can obtain information
546 about the more complex agricultural tools and methods or motivation
to try improvements, or both, even though he may not know how to
read and write. One may infer that he tends to act on the infor-
mation thus obtained, since he is more likely than his unexposed
opposite number to try out these innovations.

*178
*177 Acceptance of Urban Patterns

369 The printed word and the mass media are, of course, not solely
channels for the communication of knowledge. They are, at the
same time a means whereby the farmers may establish some sort of
contact with the more sophisticated world outside the community
even with highly urban Bangkok.

The survey indicates in a general way the extent to which
[291] the people of Bang Chan have accepted urban patterns. Their grow-
[416] ing acceptance of urban modes is readily apparent even to a casual
[207] visitor: many own shoes, flashlights, wrist watches, radios,
bicycles, fountain pens, modern furniture.* Other urban behavior
[493] is likewise beginning to be noticeable.

One very simple indication of the degree to which urban in-
[413] fluences have penetrated is the change in manners of taking
[358] food. The farmers traditionally eat with their hands rather than
using a fork or spoon. In Bangkok, however, eating utensils are
customarily served with the meals in restaurants and are widely
*177 adopted as well by the city population. Some Bang Chan inhabi-
*178 tants have picked up this simple urban custom and have substituted
it for eating mainly with their hands. In Bang Chan of 1955, for
264 example, a sizeable minority (26 per cent) report that they use a
369 spoon, fork or both for the evening meal.

That such a simple question can roughly measure exposure
[207] to urban influences, is indicated in the following table, which
[546] shows that respondents who report customarily eating with "urban
utensils" are more likely to be exposed frequently to radio and
motion pictures and are more likely to have visited in Bangkok.

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[412] * Survey respondents report that their households possess a
flashlight (81 per cent); scissors (66 per cent); kerosene lamp
(27 per cent); radio (14 per cent). About 41 per cent say they
own at least one pair of shoes.